

## **Summary of Input and Recommendations of the State Rehabilitation Council; Response of the Designated State Unit; and Explanations for Rejection of Input or Recommendations**

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### **State Unified Plan**

Per the "Plan Development and Implementation" section of the State Unified Plan, in establishing a partnership with other workforce entities in its submission, input, recommendations and full disclosure concerning public vocational rehabilitation were provided through consultations with workforce agencies, groups and individuals, including the State Rehabilitation Council. An invitation was extended to all Workforce Investment Act partners to participate in all the public rehabilitation state plan meetings.

The state vocational rehabilitation plans have been made available to all workforce partners for comment continuously since February of 2000. The vocational rehabilitation plan updates of the respective DSU's were presented during meetings of the State Workforce Development Council. The updates were accepted and will be included as attachments to the State Unified Plan. Public vocational rehabilitation is represented on all 19 certified Career Centers in South Dakota. The VR plans were made available to the public and the councils of the Career Centers. The DSU staff on these councils have provided comments and answered questions. Public vocational rehabilitation and all Rehabilitation Act requirements have been incorporated into the State Unified Plan. The public vocational rehabilitation agencies in South Dakota submit Attachment 4.2(c) of the VR state plans as attachments to the State Unified Plan section for purpose of descriptions of joint planning and implementation.

### **State Rehabilitation Council – Board of Vocational Rehabilitation**

The Board of Vocational Rehabilitation (Board), South Dakota's State Rehabilitation Council, has been providing input and advice to the Division of Rehabilitation Services (Division or DRS) since 1977. The Board has been successful in obtaining appointments from the Governor's Office, and as a result, the Board has met all the composition requirements as required by the Rehabilitation Act.

## **Board of Vocational Rehabilitation Meetings**

In accordance with the Rehabilitation Act and the State's open meetings law, SDCL 1-25-1, the Board holds quarterly meetings at a minimum. These meetings are open to the public and held in various locations statewide. Meetings held during the report period included:

June 8-9, 2005  
Vermillion

September 7-8, 2005  
Pierre, SD

December 6-7, 2005  
Sioux Falls, SD

March 30, 2006  
Rescheduled/Conference call

## **Summary of Input and Recommendations**

- Staff support agreement for the Board of Vocational Rehabilitation and the Statewide Independent Living Council was re-negotiated. The Chairs of both the Board and Council submitted a letter to the provider, which indicated they were pleased with the provision of staff support. The agreement was re-negotiated for one year with no substantial changes.

*Division's Response: The Division supports this recommendation and a new contract was implemented.*

- The Board solicited nominations for pending vacancies from over 300 individuals and organizations statewide. The nominees were submitted to the Governor's Office for his review and action along with the names of members who were interested in serving a second term.

*Division's Response: The Division supports this activity and assisted in the process.*

- Recommendation that the Board host its June meeting in conjunction with the Youth Leadership Forum. This allowed Board members to attend the luncheon and the legislative panel prior to their meeting. This provided members with the opportunity to meet and talk with the student delegates attending the forum.

*Division's Response: The Division supports this recommendation and it was implemented.*

- The Board's Executive Committee met in May. During this meeting, the committee made a motion to approve the draft State Plan Attachments as reviewed and revised by the Consumer Services Committee. This action item was approved by the full Board at their June meeting.

*Division's Response:* *The Division supports this recommendation and Board's recommendations were incorporated in the state plan.*

- Recommendation of the Board to host public meetings in conjunction with other statewide events (i.e., Mike Walling Benefits and Employment training sessions). Two meetings were held jointly with the Statewide Independent Living Council, Freedom to Work Steering Committee, Board of Service to the Blind and Visually Impaired and both divisions. It was the consensus of the Board that hosting a meeting in conjunction with another event helped bring about good discussion with a good turnout of individuals with disabilities, family members and other interested individuals (i.e., service providers, teachers, disability related organizations).

*Division's Response:* *The Division supports this recommendation and it was implemented.*

- Recommendation to have Order of Selection as a continuing agenda item at each Board meeting. Division staff reported throughout the year the increase of consumers being served and the increase in case service expenditures. This agenda item will require the Board's input regarding possible expenditure reductions and/or implementing an Order of Selection, in addition to hosting public meetings for input.

*Division's Response:* *The Division supports this recommendation and it was implemented.*

- Recommendation of the Board to send representatives to the State Rehabilitation Council (SRC) "train the trainer" workshop held in Dallas, Texas. Four board members, Division Director and Board staff attended the workshop. The objectives of the training were to empower attendees to advocate for improvements in the vocational rehabilitation program in order to enhance opportunities for high quality employment for individuals with disabilities.

*Division's Response:* *The Division supports this recommendation and it was implemented.*

- The Board was approached by the Department of Human Services (DHS) seeking letters of support for the Medicaid Infrastructure Grant reapplication and the Division of Rehabilitation Services' In Service Training Grant application. The Board provided letters of support for both applications.

*Division's Response:* *The Division supports this activity.*

- During the August Executive Committee meeting, the committee discussed the Strategic Planning Funds line item within the staff support agreement. The committee proposed expenditures for the following items: National Disability Employment Awareness Month, Governor's Awards Luncheon and hosting public forums. The Board approved the specific dollar amounts per activity but discussion was delayed regarding an amount to set aside for the application funding requests, until the Board finalized these policies.

*Division's Response:* *The Division supports this recommendation and it was implemented.*

- Recommendation to add the following items to the Board's meeting agendas: Restructuring of RSA, Workforce Investment Act, Medicare Part D, State Plan Review and Monitoring/Board's Role, and Statewide Needs Assessment.

*Division's Response:* *The Division supports this recommendation and it was implemented.*

- At the Board's September meeting the "BVR Strategic Planning Funding Application for Organizations" was approved. These limited funds were made available to assist organizations to promote vocational rehabilitation opportunities for persons with all types of disabilities, or to develop or implement innovative approaches to expand and improve the provision of vocational rehabilitation services to individuals with the most significant disabilities.

*Division's Response:* *The Division supports this activity.*

- A member of the Board approached the Executive Committee with a request to send a letter to the Executive Director of South Dakota Advocacy Services expressing concerns raised at the Board's September meeting regarding the content of the Client Assistance Program video. A letter was drafted and reviewed by the Executive Committee and the letter was forwarded.

*Division's Response:* *The Division supports this recommendation and it was implemented.*

- A recommendation was made to show two videos to the Board at their December meeting. The videos are Freedom to Work for South Dakota and Looking Beyond Disabilities: A South Dakota Perspective. The videos are geared towards people who want to go to work and employers.

*Division's Response:* *The Division supports this recommendation and it was implemented.*

- During the November Executive Committee meeting, a motion was made to adopt the Annual Report to the Governor and RSA Commissioner. At the Board's December meeting, a motion was made to allow submitted comments on the report through December 21<sup>st</sup>. Board staff was directed to submit the report after this date.

*Division's Response:* *The Division supports this recommendation and it was implemented.*

- At the Board's December meeting the "BVR Application to Request Training Funds (Individual Application) was approved. The Board made limited funds available to empower individuals with disabilities and/or their family members to participate in training activities that will assist them in making an informed choice.

*Division's Response:* *The Division supports this recommendation and it was implemented.*

- Throughout the year the Consumer Services Committee is asked to review and provide comment on draft policies and program guides. The following items were provided to the Board for their review and comment.
  - Situational Assessments
  - Voter Registration Procedures
  - IPE Annual Review

*Division's Response:* *The Division incorporated the recommendations made by the Board of VR.*

- At the Board's March meeting a motion was passed to schedule a meeting with Robert Kean, Executive Director of South Dakota Advocacy Services to further discuss the Client Assistance Program video. The meeting would include the Executive Committee and any other interested Board member.

*Division's Response:* *The Division supports this recommendation. Mr. Robert Kean presented at the June meeting for board members to express their comments about the video.*

- The Board reviewed and approved a "Meeting and Hotel Accommodations Logistics Policy". The policy dealt with issues arising from facilities going smoke-free, accessibility needs, and honoring state rates.

*Division's Response:* *The Division supports this recommendation and it was implemented.*

- The Consumer Services Committee met in February with Division staff to review and discuss the draft State Plan Attachments. Edits were made to the attachments and presented to the full Board at their March meeting. The attachments are also posted on the Division's website for further review and comment.

*Division's Response:* *The Division incorporated the changes recommended by this Board sub committee.*

- The Public Awareness Committee presented proposed topics and meeting styles to the Board for their consideration for hosting public meetings. There was consensus among members to initiate dialogue with the following topics: Order of Selection, Retention, increasing earning levels and priorities for serving people with disabilities. Dates and locations were also agreed upon: April 26/Rapid City and May 10/Sioux Falls.

*Division's Response:* *The Division supports this recommendation and it was implemented.*

- At the Board's March meeting, there was consensus for the Executive Committee to move on vacancies for the Freedom to Work (FTW) Steering Committee as they have done in the past. The names of nominees will then be forwarded to the Secretary of DHS who then designates the appointees.

*Division's Response:* *The Division supports this recommendation but is waiting for nominations to bring forward.*

- The Board approved the Public Awareness Committee's National Disability Employment Awareness Month funding recommendations for October 2006 at the March meeting.

*Division's Response:* *The Division supports this recommendation and it was implemented.*

- The Board wrote a letter of support for Black Hills Special Services Cooperative grant application for the South Dakota Work Incentives Planning and Assistance (SDWIPA) Program (was the Benefits, Planning, Assistance and Outreach Program).

*Division's Response:* *The Division supports this activity.*

- During the Board's June 2006 meeting, there was discussion regarding the Statewide Needs Assessment and the State Plan Process. There was consensus that a "planning process" be implemented and the need for the topic to be on the agenda at each subsequent meeting.

*Division's Response:* *The Division supports this recommendation and it was implemented.*

- During the March 2006 meeting, the Division presented members with the FFY 2006 year end report that includes the results of the consumer satisfaction survey. This information was again reviewed with the members at the June 2006 meeting if they had any further questions or discussions. This information may be used in future Board activities with strategic planning.

*Division's Response:* *The Division continues to make information available to the Board of VR that includes the results of the consumer satisfaction survey. It is anticipated that this information may be used by the Board in future activities.*

- The Board agreed to invite representatives from the following programs to provide updates on their respective programs: Youth Leadership Forum, Teacher Institute and SD Work Incentives Planning and Assistance (SDWIPA) Program.

*Division's Response:* *The Division supports this recommendation and will assist with this activity in the near future.*

- During the June 2006 meeting, members discussed the public meetings held in Rapid City and Sioux Falls. Attendance was greater at the Rapid City meeting with approximately 38 individuals present, representing a majority of individuals with disabilities and family members. This meeting had the largest number of consumers present due to scheduling it in conjunction with the Mike Walling Benefits and Employment training and offering lunch. The Sioux Falls meeting had a lesser turnout of twenty-four individuals, representing a majority of service providers. The Board and Division have struggled with ideas and formats of how to best obtain public comment. The Board assigned the Consumer Services Committee with the task of identifying strategies to hosting public meetings. The discussion included involving the South Dakota's Freedom to Work Project because this is a priority for them also.

*Division's Response:* *The Division supports this recommendation and will assist with this activity in the near future.*

- The State Plan document and related attachments were reviewed again with the Board at their June meeting. Division staff highlighted the recent changes subsequent to visiting with South Dakota's Rehabilitation Services Administration liaison. Members were asked to submit further

recommendations as soon as possible in order for the Division to submit the State Plan prior to July 1<sup>st</sup>.

*Division's Response: The State Plan and related documents were presented to the VR Board on multiple occasions and their recommendations were incorporated. Division supports this recommendation and it was implemented.*